

A Woman's Perspective From the Deputy Administrator U.S. Small Business Administration



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— From Melanie

Dear Friends:

I have met and spoken with many of you as I travel throughout the country. I would like to thank you, because your stories have inspired me and touched my heart. Everywhere I go, I am reminded how important small business is to this country - you truly are the heart and soul of America!

This week, I would like to share with you information about the U.S. Small Business Administration's Women's Business Centers and all of the resources they have to offer female and minority entrepreneurs. These centers are so important because, as you know, women are leading the way in this economy! I'm also proud to tell you about SBA's banner year. If you don't know about how SBA can help your business, you should!

I look forward to continuing to talk with you about issues that matter to women and small businesses - your issues are my issues, we are allies with a mutual cause, to empower entrepreneurs!!

With Warmest Regards,
Melanie Sabelhaus
Deputy Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration

— Did She Do That?

Success stories, mentoring and resources of special interest to women.

Style & Structure Design and Build Blaine, Minnesota

Cynthia Anderson's husband died unexpectedly in the fall of 2003. At the time of his death, he was operating a general construction company he had started two years previously. In addition to grieving the loss of her husband, Cynthia had to make some decisions regarding the company. She decided that she would have try running the firm, and in January of 2004, she began managing and operating it.

Before taking over, Cynthia went to St. Paul-based WomenVenture for advice. WomenVenture is one of the SBA's 105 nationally designated

Women's Business Centers (WBC) based in St. Paul. WomenVenture provides technical assistance, consulting and small loans to help women entrepreneurs get started in business and succeed. At WomenVenture, Cynthia gained the confidence that she could run a construction business, even though this is often thought of as a non-traditional type of business for a woman to operate. The consultants at WomenVenture also helped her develop a business plan and a loan request. In addition, she received a \$35,000 SBA MicroLoan from WomenVenture to help with working capital needs.

She discovered that she is a terrific sales person, and with the right general manager and subcontractors, she soon secured three jobs over \$100,000 each.

— What's New?

The SBA has granted funding for 21 new WBCs in FY2005, bringing the total to 105 Women's Business Centers serving female entrepreneurs nationwide!

Women's Business Centers are public-private partnerships with the SBA Office of Women's Business Ownership (OWBO). These centers are dedicated to the individual professional development of women by providing training, resources, referrals, support and advocacy to those seeking to create, sustain, or grow micro businesses. Other services include technical assistance, help with business plan writing, business counseling, and special workshops, which include Internet training and money-management seminars.

New Women's Business Centers:

California:

Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment
LTSC Community Development Corporation, Asian
Pacific Program Joint Venture Women's
Business Center
Anew America Community Corporation
Valley Economic Development Center

Georgia:

Cobb Microenterprise Center

Florida:

Jacksonville Chamber Foundation, Inc.
Minority/ Women Business Enterprise Alliance,
Inc.
The Center for Technology, Enterprise and
Development, Inc.

Illinois:

The Abilities Center, Goodwill Industries of
Northern Illinois and Wisconsin Stateline
Area, Inc.

Indiana:

Neighborhood Self-Employment Initiative,
Indiana Women's Business Center

Minnesota:

Northeast Entrepreneur Fund, Inc

Montana:

Blackfeet Women's Business Center (BWBC)

Massachusetts:

Center for Women and Enterprise

Michigan:

Cornerstone Alliance

New Mexico:

Women's Economic Self Sufficiency Team (WESST)

New York:

Business Outreach Center Network (BOC)

Community Action Agency of Franklin County,
Inc., Dba ComLinks

Texas:

Southwest Community Investment Corporation

Business Invest In Growth, Inc.

Washington:

The Inland Northwest Community Access Network
(TINCAN)

West Virginia:

Region 1 Workforce Investment Board, Work 4WV
Region 1, Inc.

— Critical Issues

IMPROVING ACCESS TO CAPITAL AND CONTRACTS FOR WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

"Capital is the lifeblood of small businesses, and every time we approve a loan that means another small business has a chance to grow and contribute to the economy."

Administrator Hector V. Barreto

An important issue to this administration, and to me personally, is improving access to capital and government contracts for women-owned business. Did you know that women own **10.6 million** businesses generating **\$2.5 trillion** in sales and employing more than **19 million** workers? Not only do women generate trillions for the economy but they start businesses at twice the rate of men!

It was another banner year for SBA in **LOANS TO WOMEN**! **18,000 loans**, amounting to **\$2.5 billion**, went into the hands of women entrepreneurs. That was an **increase of 27%** from last year and more than **doubles** the number of loans to women over the past three years!

Women also received more **GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS** than ever before. Between FY02 and FY03 the total value of federal contracts to women-owned businesses rose from **\$6.8 billion** to **\$8.3 billion**. Over the past three years, prime contract dollars **increased by 81%**, or more than **\$3.7 billion**.

BUSINESS MATCHMAKING has also been highly successful in connecting women to federal contracting opportunities. Since its inception, business matchmaking has created approximately **22,000** one-on-one appointments between small businesses and procurement officers. Of those businesses that received contracts, **50%** have been women-owned businesses, amounting to **65%** of the contracting dollars.

■ Connections & Directions

"I've got ideas to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. The role of government is not to create wealth. The role of government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, in which people feel confident about starting their own business and growing their small business to a larger business."

President George W. Bush

Online Resources:

[Online Women's Business Center](#)

[American Business Women's Association \(ABWA\)](#)

[Association for Women in Science \(AWIS\)](#)

[Business & Professional Women / USA \(BPW\)](#)

[Business Women's Network](#)

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UPCOMING ISSUES: HEALTHCARE
TAXES